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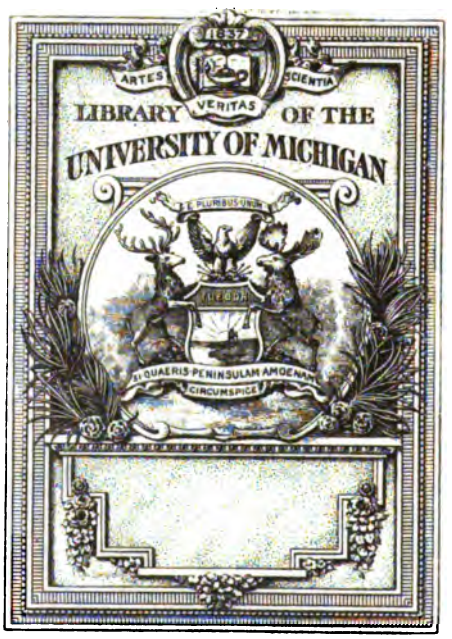
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THE

Missive of Justus Falckner,

OF GERMANTOWN,

CONCERNING THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF PENNSYLVANIA IN THE YEAR 1701.

TRANSLATED BY

JULIUS FRIEDRICH SACHSE,

LIFE MEMBER HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA; MEMBER AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY; PENNSYLVANIA-GERMAN SOCIETY, ETC.

Reprinted from the "Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography" for July, 1897.

PHILADELPHIA.

1897.

Abdruck Eines Schreibens An Tit. Herrn D. Henr. Muhlen/

Aus Germanton / in der Americaniſchen Province Penſylvania, ſonſt Nova Suecia, den erſten Auguſti, im Jahr unſers Heyls eintauſend ſiebenhundert und eins.

Den Zuſtand der Kirchen in America betreffend.

MDCCII.

TITLE-PAGE OF FALCKNER'S MISSIVE TO GERMANY, 1701.

THE

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THE

MISSIVE OF JUSTUS FALCKNER.

Justus Falckner, writer of the following missive, and a member of the community of German Pietists who settled on the Wissahickon in 1694, under the leadership of Johannes Kelpius, was a native of Saxony; born November 22, 1672, at Langenreinsdorf. He studied under Thomasius and the elder Francke at Halle. While yet in his diaconate, he accompanied his brother Daniel, upon the latter's return to America in the year 1700. After living in seclusion on the romantic banks of the Wissahickon, to perfect himself in the esoteric teachings of the brotherhood, he re-entered the world, as it were, and on November 24, 1703, was ordained to the priesthood by Pastors Rudman, Biörck, and Sandel, at the Swedish Lutheran Church (Gloria Dei) at Wicacoa. He immediately left for his new field of missionary labors in New York, East Jersey, and Long Island, where he ministered to the Low-Dutch and High-German Lutherans until his death in 1723. Justus Falckner was the first Lutheran clergyman who was ordained in America. His "missive" or report to Rev. Heinrich Muhlen, an influential church dignitary in Holstein, is not alone valuable as it sets forth the religious condition of the Germans within the Province at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but it also contains a plea for an organ for the Swedish Church in Philadelphia. That this appeal was not in vain is shown from records still extant, and which make mention as early as 1703 of "Jonas the organist." The copy of this heretofore unknown contribution to the history of our Province was found in the library of the University at Rostock, Germany, where it is bound up with a number of other tracts.

As it was impossible to obtain the original, a photographic fac-simile of the pamphlet was made, by permission of the authorities, and is now in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The title-page and colophon are here reproduced.

"IMPRINT | of a MISSIVE | TO Tit: Lord D.Henr. Muhlen, | From Germanton in the AMERI | CAN Province of Pensylvania, otherwise | New Sweden, the First of August, in the Year | of our salvation One thousand, seven hundred | and one | CONCERNING the condition of the CHURCHES | in AMERICA. | MDCCII."

"SHALOM.

"RIGHT REVEREND, MOST LEARNED, ESPECIALLY HONORED,
"LORD GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT.

"In sending to Your Magnificence the present missive from such a distant part of the world, I am moved thereunto partly by the recollection of the high favor and civility which you extended toward me while I was in Schleswig with you, prior to my departure from Holstein to America, as you also were kindly disposed, by virtue of your episcopal and priestly office, to extend your great ecclesiastical benediction, and thereby to further my proposed journey to a blessed purpose; upon the other part, I am obliged thereto by the express commands which you enjoined upon me at sundry times, that I should correspond with you as much as possible concerning the condition of the church in America; (*de statu Ecclesiæ in America*). This honored command emanating from the love of God, I will comply with for the good of his church, and give satisfaction so far as I may: therefore I will make a beginning herewith. Indeed I must declare that since the time when I was there [in Schleswig] I have now, God be thanked, arrived safely here. This was during the past year at the beginning of August, after we had sailed from England on May 25. Since my arrival

here, I have for many material reasons, lived entirely alone in a small block-house, which I had built for me, as an eremite in the desert (*in Deserto*). Having had but slight intercourse with the people, much less travelled hither and thither, and having [merely] gathered information from one and the other, so I do not know the particulars of the *status* here in every respect.

"But now, after having schooled myself a little in the solitude, I begin as if from a mirror (*tanquam ex speculo*) to take cognizance of one fact and the other. I have gone more among the people, and subsequently have resolved to give up the solitude I have thus far maintained, and, according to my humble powers, to strive at least with good intention publicly to assist in doing and effecting good in this spiritual and corporeal wilderness. So far as I am able to draw conclusions concerning the condition of the churches in these parts, and indeed particularly in this Province, it is still pretty bad. The Aborigines or Indians, from lack of sufficient good instruction, remain in their blindness and barbarity, and moreover are angered at the bad living of the Christians, especially at the system of trading which is driven with them, and they only learn vices which they did not have formerly, such as drunkenness, stealing &c. The local Christian minority, however, is divided into almost innumerable sects, which pre-eminently may be called sects and hordes, as Quakers, Anabaptists, Naturalists, Rationalists, Independents, Sabbatarians and many others, especially secret insinuating sects, whom one does not know what to make of, but who, nevertheless, are all united in these beautiful principles, if it please the Gods (*si Dis placet*): Do away with all good order, and live for yourself as it pleases you! The Quakers are the most numerous, because the Governor favors this sect, and one might be inclined to call this country a dissecting-room of the Quakers; for no matter how our theologians labored to dissect this carcase and discover its interiors, they could not do it so well as the Quakers here in this country are now doing themselves. It would easily make a whole tractate were I only to set forth

how they, by transgressing their own principles, shew in plain daylight the kind of spirit that moves them, when they virtually scoff at the foundation of such principles, and become Ishmaels of all well regulated church-institutions. *Hic Rhodus, hic saltant.* When I learn that my letters come safely into the hands of Your Magnificence, I will at another time report *specialora.* The Protestant Church, however, is here divided into three confessions and nations. According to the confession, the local Protestants, as they are comprehended under this name in the European Roman Empire, are either of the Evangelical Lutheran, or of the Presbyterian and Calvinistic Church. And as the Protestant Church is here also divided into three nations, so there are here an English Protestant Church and a Swedish Protestant Lutheran Church; and also persons of the German nation of the Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed churches. About these more at another time.

"Now I will only speak somewhat of the Evangelical Church of the Swedish nation, and touch upon the German Evangelical Lutherans.

"The Swedes have two church congregations: one at Philadelphia, the capital of this country, and another several miles therefrom on a river called Christina. They have also two devout, learned and conscientious preachers, among whom I know *in specie* the Reverend Magister Rudman. He, with his colleagues, endeavours to instil the true fear and knowledge of God into his hearers, who previously, from a lack of good instruction and church discipline, had become rather unruly. The outward worship of God is held in the Swedish language, and partly according to the Swedish liturgy, so far as church ceremonies are concerned.

"The Germans, however, I have spoken of not without cause as merely several Evangelical Lutheran Germans, and not the German Evangelical Lutheran Church: those who are destitute of altar and priest forsooth roam about in this desert (*scilicet qui aræ Sacerdoteque destituti, vagantur hoc in deserto:*) a deplorable condition indeed. Moreover there

Mau

is here a large number of Germans who, however, have partly crawled in among the different sects who use the English tongue, which is first learned by all who come here. A number are Quakers and Anabaptists; a portion are Free-thinkers and assimilate with no one. They also allow their children to grow up in the same manner. In short there are Germans here, and perhaps the majority, who despise God's Word and all outward good order; who blaspheme the sacraments, and frightfully and publicly give scandal, (for the spirit of errors and sects has here erected for itself an asylum: *Spiritus enim errorum et Sectarum Asylum sibi hic constituit*); and herein is the great blame and cause of the lack of establishment of an outward and visible church assembly. Then while in the *Theologia naturali omnibus hominibus connata* there is as it were, the first *Thesis: religiosum quendam cultum observato*, so it happens that when these people come here and find no better outward divine service, they rather select one than none at all although they are already *Libertini;* for even Libertinism is not without its outward forms, whereby it is constituted a special religion without being one.

"Now I recommend to Your Magnificence, as an intelligent (*cordaten*) German Evangelical theologian, for your mature consideration and reflection for God and his church's sake, on account of the wretched condition of the German Evangelical communities, whether with assistance perhaps from some exalted hand, some establishment of an Evangelical church assembly could be made in America, since the Germans are now increasing rapidly. For as most of the Germans are *adducendi et reducendi*, so must the means be expected to come from others; or I will say the decoy (*Lock-Pfeiffe*) wherewith which the birds are to be allured cannot and must not be expected to come from the birds, but must be made by or for such as want to entice them here.

"Both myself and my brother, who is sojourning here, keep ourselves to the Swedish church, although we understand little or nothing of their language. We have also been the means of influencing divers Germans by our ex-

ample, so that they now and then come to the assemblies, even though they do not know the language. Still they are gradually being redeemed from barbarism, and becoming accustomed to an orderly outward service.

"Above all one of the Swedish Pastors, Magister Rudman, has offered, regardless of the difficulty to assume the German dialect (*dialectum*). For nothing less than the love of God's honor he has offered to go to this trouble and now and then to deliver a German address in the Swedish church, until the Germans can have a church of their own, together with the necessary establishment. Accordingly the Germans who still love the evangelical truth, and a proper outward church order, much prefer to attend (*interesse*) the Swedish churches here until they can also have their divine worship in their own language as a people. The means are hereby offered in a measure to spread the Gospel truth in these wilds, whereby many of their brethren and fellow-countrymen may be brought from wrong to right, from darkness to light, and from the whirlpool of sectaries to the peace and quiet of the true church. Wherefore such Swedish Evangelical churches, for my humble part, have best and heartfelt wishes, and I seek also and pray Your Magnificence to kindly recommend, as occasion offers, such churches with their ministers, to His Illustrious Serene Highness and Her Highness his spouse, who is a royal Swedish princess, and also to contrive that your interest may be earnestly brought to the notice of his Serene Majesty of Sweden.

"I will here take occasion to mention that many others besides myself, who know the ways of this land, maintain that music would contribute much towards a good Christian service. It would not only attract and civilize the wild Indian, but it would do much good in spreading the Gospel truths among the sects and others by attracting them. Instrumental music is especially serviceable here. Thus a well-sounding organ would perhaps prove of great profit, to say nothing of the fact that the Indians would come running from far and near to listen to such unknown melody,

and upon that account might become willing to accept our language and teaching, and remain with people who had such agreeable things; for they are said to come ever so far to listen to one who plays even upon a reed-pipe (*rohr-pfeiffe*): such an extraordinary love have they for any melodious and ringing sound. Now as the melancholy, Saturnine stingy Quaker spirit has abolished (*relegiret*) all such music, it would indeed be a novelty here, and tend to attract many of the young people away from the Quakers and sects to attend services where such music was found, even against the wishes of their parents. This would afford a good opportunity to show them the truth and their error.

"If such an organ-instrument (*Orgel-werck*) were placed in the Swedish church, (for the Germans as yet have no church, and the Swedish church is of a high build and resonant structure) it would prove of great service to this church. As the majority of the Swedes are young people, and mostly live scattered in the forest, far from the churches, and as we by nature are all inclined to good, and above all to what may serve our souls, such as the Word of God which is dead and gone, so are especially the youth; and it is so with the Swedish youth now under consideration. When they have performed heavy labor for the whole week, as is customary here, they would sooner rest on a Sunday, and seek some pleasure, rather than perhaps go several miles to listen to a sermon. But if there were such music there, they would consider church-going as a recreation for their senses.

"Thus does Luther of blessed memory in one place highly recommend the use of the organ and sacred music for this very reason, that it is serviceable, and induces young and simple and, says he foolish folk, to listen unto and receive God's Word. It would also prove an agreeable thing for God, angels and men; if in this solitude and wilderness, which as it were struggles under so many *Secula*, the Lord of Hosts, with whom there is fulness of joy and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore, would be praised and honored with cymbal and organ, as he hath

commanded. And it may be assumed that even a small organ-instrument and music in this place would be acceptable to God, and prove far more useful than many hundreds in Europe, where there is already a superfluity of such things; and the more common they are, the more they are misused.

"If now Your Magnificence were kindly to intercede with his Serene Highness and Her Highness his Consort, and also with such other exalted personages with whom you are held in high esteem, and present to them the benefit to be hoped for; I doubt not, but that something could be effected. There are in Europe masters enough who build such instruments, and a fine one can be secured for 300 or 400 thalers. Then if an experienced organist and musician could be found, and a curious one who would undertake so far a journey, he would be very welcome here. In case this could not be, if we only had an organ, some one or other might be found here who had knowledge thereof.

"Finally if Your Magnificence would be highly disposed to answer, I believe the best address for the letter would be in care of the Swedish Resident in London, through whom also the present letter is addressed. Or perhaps you are aware of some better opportunity.

"In conclusion I now commend YOUR MAGNIFICENCE to the protection and grace of God to all prosperity, and remain

"to YOUR MAGNIFICENCE

"GERMANTON in the American Province of Pensylvania, otherwise New Sweden, the 1st. of August in the year of our Salvation one thousand seven hundred and one.

"For Prayer and service

"most devoted,

"JUSTUS FALCKNER."

drey oder vierhundert Thaler haben; könte man auch einen erfahrnen Organisten und Musicum finden der curieux, und so eine weite Reise thun wolte/ der würde hier sehr angenehm seyn/ wäre es aber nicht/ und man hätte nur eine Orgel/ so möchte sich etwa noch ein oder der andere hier finden/ der Wissenschafft davon hätte. Schließlichen wenn Eu. Magnificentz vielgeneigt antworten wolten/ so glaube wird die beste addresse der Brieffe an den Schwedischen Resident in Londen sey/ wohin auch dieser gegenwärtige Brieff addressiret worden/ oder vielleicht wissen Sie selber schon bessere Gelegenheit. - - Nun ich schliesse und empfehle Eu. Magnificentz dem Schutz und der Gnade GOttes zu allen Wohlergehen/ und verharre

Euer Magnificence

Germanton in der Americanischen Province Pensylvania, sonst nova Suecia, den 1. Augusti im Jahr unsers Heyls Eintausend siebenhundert und eins.

Zu Gebet und Diensten verbundenster

Justus Falckner.